

Shinsengumi Family

by manaika

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Summary: AU, gender swap. Episode 3 â€“ Just a random Day in the Shinsengumi family. Except it isn't.

1. Chapter 1

You know like in Prince of Tennis there were these Chibi episodes with the Seishun family? Where every member of the team was switched to a tag of the family? Well, it's generally the same idea here, just without the chibifieing. There's a Shinsengumi family, there's an Oni family and there are troubles and humor, I guess? Ah hell, I don't know either what hit me. Actually, I was planning to write a one-shot for halloween (a spin-off from Price of your Heart, the one where Shinkawa-chan walks in on them, actually) when this popped into my mind and didn't let go. Just...just tell me what you think.

[b]Rating[/b]: PG-15?

[b]Warnings[/b]: Uh...gender swap, I suppose? Cursing and questionable education methods? AU

Episode 1 â€“ Just a random Saturday in the Shinsengumi family.

Episode 2 â€“ Halloween special

[u]Disclaimer[/u]: Doth not own. Doth not make money using thus. Doth own the idea. Doth own the swap. Doth want to die.

[b][u]EPISODE 1[/u][/b]

It was a sunny Saturday morning of the early summer in the beautiful but fictive town of 'Hakuoki', full of peace and quiet everywhere. Particulary one house was especially peaceful, like all of the inhabitants were quietly enjoying each other's company, not craving anything in the entire world.

"MAN, SOUJIIIII! That's NOT FAIR!"

Or not.

There was a loud crash coming from the house just at the end of the street, followed by a yell, laughter and the stomping of feet, loud like a herd of raging elephants.

"World's not fair, Heisuke, get used to it!"

There was more laughter and more stomping of feet and another loud crash and one of the three people in front of the house raised her head, a concerned look displayed on her young, pretty doe-eyed face.

"Kaa-san, shouldn't we do something?" the oldest daughter of the Shinsengumi family asked, casting worried glances towards the inside of the house.

The red-headed woman with sparkling amber eyes, sitting on the upper step leading to the front door, perched against the pillar of the veranda, just raised the cup lying next to her and took a sip of the clear liquid, never looking up from her cards.

"They are boys, Chizuru. No sense in trying to make them stop, trust me. Your move, Shinpachi." She told the man sitting across of her.

Shinpachi, sitting in a similar manner as his sister, just smirked and also took a sip from his sake. "Your mother knows what she says, Chizuru. Sango grew up with a bunch of energetic boys. I raise to fifty. Your move. Had more energy than us, actually."

"As the only sister, I had to. Show me your cards."

Shinpachi sighed and threw his hand before him. Sango smirked in unholy glee and slowly uncovered her cards.

"I win. Another round?"

Another loud crash interrupted the round, followed by yelling and a string of curses by a deep, manly voice, resonating through the house.

"AND IF I HEAR ANY MORE SOUND, YOU'RE GROUNDED FOR A MONTH, YOU LITTLE BASTARDS!"

Sango was just dealing out the cards, when the door burst open, revealing raven-haired man, face twisted in rage in sharp contrast to the almost angelic looking dark-haired girl with huge dark-blue eyes in his arms.

"DAMNIT, CAN'T YOU DO SOMETHING?!" he shouted at Sango. "I CAN'T EVEN READ SAIGO A STORY WITHOUT EVERY WORD BEING INTERRUPTED!"

Sango just turned at her husband lazily, a sweet smile playing on her lips.

"Anata. They're boys. One is twelve, the other is nine. What do you expect?" then her look grew suddenly several shades darker and

pierced itself directly through her husband's eyes. "And didn't I tell you not to curse in front of the kids? And not to yell at me?!"

Toushi " that was her husband's name " gulped.

"Yes, darling."

The cards were dealt out and the twins took them, to analyze what they had on the hand and set the bets, while Toushi just shook his head.

"Poker again? I always wondered how anyone would ever want to learn a game like that. Keeping a straight face for hours and half-depend on luck. I don't see the appeal."

"I raise to fifteen. Well, when we played with his friends," Sango jerked her head to her brother "it always had to be strip poker and I was the only girl. You learn really fast that way."

"I do [i]not[/i] want to know."

"No, you probably don't."

Chizuru saw this as a good opportunity to intervene.

"Kaa-san, you didn't forget that we need to go shopping today, right? We don't have anymore vegetables and the meat is running low too. And obaa-san, ojii-san, auntie and uncle come today over for dinner."

It would have been an overstatement to call that small jerk that Sango's body did a flinch, but it came pretty damn close to it. Shinpachi barely concealed his smirk. His little twin sister, or rather bro', as he called her more often than not, might have been a good poker player, great cook, loving mother, tough drinking competition and a grandious athlete, but as a housewife she plain simply sucked. Most of the housework was done by her oldest child, their fourteen years old daughter Chizuru, the only competent girl for such things in that crazy household.

"Of course, sweetie, we'll go shopping, I'll just finish this round."

At that moment the last two occupants of the house took the opportunity to venture outside, with 'venture' equaling 'running like a herd of wild buffalos and knocking everything over that was in their way, the deck of cards, their mother and the expensive sake included'.

And suddenly everything became stock still as every eye turned to look at the matrone of the family.

Sango, covered in cards, sherds of white glass and pretty expensive sake took a deep breath.

"Alright boys. I just had enough."

The brothers gulped and Toushi smirked into himself, then turned to the angel in his arms.

"Come on Saigo, let's go back inside. Tou-san will read you a story."

Saigo looked at her father with big round eyes sparkling with anticipation.

"With lots of warriors?"

"Yes, with lots of warriors."

"And swords?"

"And swords."

Saigo smiled a small angelic smile and snuggled close to her father, who carried her inside.

Meanwhile Sango cleaned herself up and stood now in front of her two sons, who looked at her with big round eyes similar to Saigo's, just with less anticipation and more fear playing in them.

"Kaa-san..." Heisuke, the younger of the brothers, Saigo's twin-brother started. "Kaa-san we...we didn't mean to...it...it was an accident!"

"And it was all Heisuke's fault!" Souji, the older brother said.

"What?!" Heisuke shot his brother an angry look. "Why me?! If anyone's, it's your fault alone! Kaa-san don't listen to him! He started it!"

"No way, it was you, you brat!"

"Brat yourself!"

The mother just listened to them silently, small droplets of sake occassionally still dripping from her trademark jeans, but as soon as the door closed behind her husband, she stoped holding back any longer.

"SILENCE!"

The two hassles fell quiet in that instant.

"So." Sango spoke in a deadly quiet voice and the brothers cringed. "Now you two will go back inside and clean the entire mess you made."

"WHAT?!" the boys shot a horrified look towards their mother.

"But kaa-san!"

"You can't poss-"

"SILENCE!"

There was quiet again.

â€žWho else do you suppose will clean after you two?! Your sister has already enough work as it is!"

â€žYes, but only because you're such a crappy housewife..." Souji murmured under his breath, but unfortunately, his mother heard him.

â€žWhat was that, Souji?!"

â€žNothing, kaa-san!"

â€žGood." Sango raised her hand and one long, elegant finger pointed to the door. â€žNow go."

The boys ran inside like bitten.

â€žAnd I want it to be clean once we get home! Or else you won't get dinner!" their mother yelled after them and two panicked â€žYES MA'AM!" answered.

Only as unusual silence settled across the yard, did Sango dare to heave a sigh and massage her head to stop the throbbing.

â€žAlright, that settled, we can go shopping, right? Or is there any other immediate issue I have to deal with?" with that question she turned to her daughter, who just shook his head in answer.

â€žGood. Just let me change the clothes. Can't show myself like this to people. What would our neighbours think?"

â€žIncluding, or excluding me?" Shinpachi asked and promptly regretted it as his twin shot him one of [i]those[/i] looks.

Aw hell, he should have stayed quiet.

ox*xo

â€žSo tell me, bro', " Shinpachi spoke up while pushing the cart in front of himself. â€žWhy did I have to accompany you again?"

They were currently at the nearby supermarket and he felt utterly useless. All he did was push the cart and listen to Sango rant about the upcoming summer Olympics. His sister shot him a sharp look.

â€žFirstly, to push the cart."

Shinpachi couldn't but roll his eyes. How typical.

â€žSecondly, for punishment."

Yes, that was another common reason, though half of the times Shinpachi had no clue what it was he did wrong.

â€žThirdly to keep me occupied. I don't want to stand here doing nothing, looking like an idiot."

Finally, the root of the problem.

â€žYes, instead you look like an occupied idiot." Ah, there was that look again, but Shinpachi had an entire lifetime of training to get used to it, so he ignored it. â€žWhile your fourteen years old daughter runs around, looking for all the world like she was born into a family of housewives. I sincerely ask myself from whom she got the genes."

â€žI blame it on Toushi. His mother was always a great housewife, or so he says."

Yeah, at every possible occassion, with extra accent on the 'great housewife'.

It was no secret that Shinpachi disapproved of the marriage of his bro'. Not that he disliked Toushi, actually he though his brother-in-law was a great man, just...not exactly what he would have prefered for his little sis', as he sometimes secretly called her.

â€žRight. So instead of learning from your daughter, you just stand around, pretending that you actually know what fresh vegetables and good meat looks like."

Though it was also no secret, that if it wasn't for stubborn Chizuru being on her way, Sango would have never married Toushi. She had just reached the top of her professional carreer at that time, ranked steadily in the world top five, became the silver Olympionic in athletical disciplines, the endless possibilities were just unfolding in front of her and Shinpachi knew his sister would have loved to stay at that wondrous place just for a little while longer. But he supposed it was her own damn fault for spreading her legs to her old crush and not using protection. (Not that he ever told her that.) Now she had to settle with working as a personal trainer at the local sports center, three evenings a week.

â€žCan't teach new tricks to an old mutt."

Shinpachi rolled his eyes again, but decided to shut his yap for time being. There was no point in arguing with bro' over the importance of housework. He knew his bro' and that knowledge had been enough to send him packing and moving into the house next to the new couple's mere two weeks after the wedding. Though, now he was being used as the family's babysitter, servant, marriage councelor and personal punching bag, all in one. It was a good thing the type of work he was doing, could be done at home too. That and Serizawa-san was a tolerant and understanding boss.

...

Riiight.

He was interrupted from his thoughts by a whistle and the smell of pheromone overdrive.

He felt another roll of eyes was in order.

â€žYo, Mrs. Coach!"

Sango next to him groaned quietly, before she turned her attention to the young man approaching them, one of her trainees. A young pest

named Shiranui, the oldest son of the neighbours down the street.

"What does such a pretty woman as you do at such a place?"

"Shiranui-kun." Sango smiled in greeting, while Shinpachi took note of the little pull the corners of his twin's lips did whenever she was annoyed. He knew it all too well "after all, he saw it every morning in the mirror, when he had to get up early.

"That's a bit of a stupid question to ask, considering where we are." Sango replied in the same manner she always did and Shiranui smirked, while shamelessly checked the woman in front of him up and down, undressing her with his eyes, untill his look finally settled on the rich bosom.

"Charming as ever, I see."

Shinpachi found it disgusting. First of all, she could have been his mother, that boy was only seventeen. Besides the way he was trying to sneak his way into his sister's pants was utterly unacceptable. (Admittedly, Toushi's way hadn't been any better, but there was no way preventing [i]that[/i], as Shinpachi hadn't been there at the time.) Even if his twin was in spite of her age still hot stuff, considered one of the hottest woman in the neighbourhood, rivaled only by Mrs. Oni Kimigiku, the neighbour down the street.

"Right back at you." Sango retorted and looked around untill she spotted what she was searching for. "I see you're accompanying your siblings to shopping, how really nice of you."

Shinpachi couldn't bite back a snort at that. One of the things he loved about his bro' was the way she was able to manage someone who was fool enough to try seducing her. That and the trace of sarcasm in her voice. It was always a satisfaction to see the scowl form on the faces of those hormon-driven teenagers and especially on this one face.

"Yeah, well, someone has to do the babysitting."

"SHIRANUI!"

Shinpachi watched the teen roll his eyes and turn to his approaching younger brother and little sister.

"What now?"

"Did Maa tell us to buy powder sugar or vanilla powder?"

"Pretty sure it was vanilla powder and now screw off, I'm busy." Shiranui turned away from his blond brother back to Sango, but his siblings had a different opinion.

"See, I told you!" the youngest and nicest of the three, Sen-chan, who was also coincidentally Chizuru's best friend, turned to her older brother and pouted, but he ignored her, turning to the oldest.

"Are you sure?" he asked in a way that was probably supposed to be threatening, but didn't phase Shiranui the slightest.

"Yes damnit!"

"Really sure?" the younger male tried a darker look this time, but it brought no other reaction from Shiranui, than an outburst of annoyance and cursing.

"FUCK YES, KAZAMA, AND NOW GET YOUR ASS AWAY!"

Very mature and patient, Shinpachi noted.

Chizuru chose that moment to return with six different bags full of vegetables hanging from her arms.

"Here Kaa-san, now we only need to buy the meat...Oh, Sen-chan, hello!" she said as she noticed her best friend standing there.

Sen-chan smiled.

"Hi, Chizuru-chan! Are you shopping with your mother? That's so nice! Maa never has the time to shop so she always sends us." The girls were already inching closer with the clear intention to chat, an action that would probably require several hours to finish, considering the time those two spent on the phone and Shinpachi could feel the mind of his twin working overload in order to find a way to prevent this from happening, when Kazama jumped in between the girls, pushing his little sister not-so-gently away.

"Yeah, yeah, anyway. There are more important issues right now. Chizuru, marry me."

"EEEHH?!" Chizuru shot a panicked look at her mother, who had to stifle the bored yawn that built in her throat, trying her best to look seriously and failing. Shinpachi understood. It wasn't like this hadn't happened before. Sure, the first time Kazama blurted this out about two years ago, it surprised them, but since then it became rather repetitive and boring, and everyone had developed a certain kind of immunity against it. Well, everyone besides Chizuru, that was.

And Sen-chan, who never failed to hit her brother across the head and chastise him outraged.

"Kazama, enough already! How dare you say that to Chizuru-chan, in front of her mother! Apologize!"

"No, no, Sen-chan, that's alright..."

The ever same discussion about whether it was or wasn't alright ensued between the girls and Shinpachi cast a glance at Sango, who somehow, still managed to look amused. It was probably endless fun for her, to see her own daughter stumbling through boy troubles. And since she already knew the act by heart, she could meanwhile fall back into her own little world, presumably wondering about who would win the Olympics.

"Are you sure, Chizuru-chan?"

â€žYes, yes, Sen-chan, don't worry about me."

As the discussion neared to the end, Sango returned to full consciousness again and smiled at her daughter.

â€žAlright then, it's time to go, Chizuru. I still need to prepare lunch and we don't have much time left 'till then."

â€žYes, Kaa-san."

They both turned to the three siblings and everyone bowed their byes.

â€žIt was nice meeting you, but we have to go now." Sango said and Shiranui bowed a bit deeper.

â€žSo it was. I apologize for these brats, Coach."

Sango laughed. â€žNo worry, Shiranui-kun, it's nothing we aren't used to. Have a nice rest of the weekend. See you at the training on Monday."

â€žYes ma'am."

And with that they parted their ways. When Shinpachi turned around to confirm that those stalkers weren't actually following them, he spotted Shiranui giving what could have only been his sister's backside a very appreciative look.

Disgusting bastard.

ox*xo

â€žI have to say, Sango-chan, this Udon is amazing."

Shortly after Toushi's parents and his older brother with his wife arrived, the family had gathered around the large dinig table to enjoy whatever the matrone has conjured up. Sango was, in spite of everything, a great cook and even though her cooking was a little different from the usual, it was always very enjoyable.

â€žWhy, thank you okaa-sama. I'm glad you like it." Sango smiled at her mother in law, who smiled back warmly.

Genko always made sure to praise Sango in front of everyone, especially in front of Toushi. The gradnmother had probably guessed that her son would mention her at every possible occassion, when the household wasn't running in a way he was used to. She encouraged Sango, when everyone else was intent to prove the young mother that she was nothing short of a disaster in the household.

â€žReally, Sango-chan, kaa-san couldn't have made this better! It's great!"

The grandfather interjected, widening Sango's smile.

â€žThank you otou-sama."

Kondou-san had also been always very kind to Sango and never blamed

her for getting pregnant and failing in a world she was suddenly thrown into and knew nothing of. Probably because he knew his son and guessed that Toushi was just as responsible for it as Sango was. It took two to tango, after all and Toushi had never been one to keep it in his pants when there was time, place and opportunity.

But that might have been just because she gave him four grandchildren. That man loved kids and as it seemed, he wasn't getting any from his second daughter in law. Itouko, his older son Sannan's wife, just wasn't the mother type. But shw was very good at managing the household and never failed to rub it into Sango's face.

Especially after Sango got as much praise as now.

"It's really good." Itouko spoke up, but the flat tone of her voice betryed the kind words.

"You don't sound too convinced, Itouko-san." Sango replied, watching her sworn enemy with narrowed eyes.

"Ah, it's nothing worth mentioning, I just thought that it's a bit overspiced." Itouko waved off in a manner that was overly polite. Itouko was always polite and smiling, but inside she was false as a viper. Sango never really understood why Sannan had married her.

"Overspiced?" Sango wasn't new to verbal competition and polite insults and she knew an attack when she saw one.

"Yes, a little." Itouko look at her with a spark in her eyes that clearly issued a direct challenge to her cooking skills and Sango would be damned if she let this drop just so.

"Well, in our family we were used to spicier cooking. We liked it better that way." Sango rebutted, indirectly challenging Itouko's taste, which was a fireway to get underneath that sweet-lipped woman's skin. And really, Itouko's smile faltered and her eyes narrowed a break of an inch. Sango prepared herself for another attack and she knew this one would aim low.

"Oh, I wasn't questioning your traditions. It's just that I was always taught, that the cooking of the wife has to be as sweet as her love to her husband. That way she'll have him satsfied to the rest of their lives."

For a moment Sango forgot to breathe. Did Itouko just directly imply that Sango was no good for her husband?! The nerve of that viper!

Sango was vagualy aware that Shinpachi was watching her sideways very worriedly, but she ignored it. Instead she straightened herself and countered with equal force.

"Oh, really. Well, I don't know about you, but I know a dozen of other ways how to keep my husband satisfied."

There. That scored.

The conversation around them died out and now everyone was watching

them in a similar manner as Shinpachi.

Itouko shot her a poisonous look for the implication that the viper sucked in bed and maneuvered into a new attack, this time charging at Sango's methods, aiming to the lowest place with sharp precision.

â€žYes, I'm sure, but good food is the safest and distinguished one. Please forgive me for my language, but spreading legs isn't that hard."

â€žSannan-san, how is your research faring?! I heard you are developing a new product to enlighten the life, is that true?"

Before Sango was able to change her methods of attack from verbal to physical, Shinpachi jumped into the conversation, his target Sannan-san, the only person able to gain Itouko's undivided attention, when she was squabbling with Sango. And with the opponent leaving the battlefield, there wasn't anyone Sango could attack. Besides the one responsible for distracting the enemy, but Shinpachi could deal with that. After years of dealing with his bro' he was used to it.

â€žYes, the research is proceeding well." Sannan-san nodded, his smile betraying that he knew exactly what Shinpachi's objective was. â€žWe have been able to overcome the side-effects of the medication and we are almost market ready." The problem with Sannan-san was, that it was dangerous to ask him about his research, because once he started talking about it, he would soon get this glint in his eyes and then start to rant about what a great discovery he was about to make. Like now. â€žIt will be a huge breakthrough in genetic science! The greatest discovery of the century, even! It will!"

â€žAnd you, Shinpachi-kun? I hear you have been working on a new game recently?" But before it came as far, Genko swiftly changed the conversation, directing the attention this time to Shinpachi.

Shinpachi, in complete understanding to the old woman, answered immediately. â€žYes, we are almost finished with it, I'm just doing the final editing right now. It will be introduced at the convention in October." Shinpachi worked as a game developer, in charge of art design and timing. It was a huge responsibility, but he had Serizawa's complete trust. And pretty good pay, too.

â€žWhat was it called again?" Genko asked and Shinpachi wasn't happy to disappoint his sister's in-law.

â€žAh, I can't tell you yet, I'm sorry."

Sensing a dead point in the conversation, Itouko took the opportunity to start a comeback.

â€žOh, but could you perhaps show me the artwork? Your games always have such beautiful artwork."

For some reason, Itouko loved it to flirt with Shinpachi. She would lower her eyelids so they appeared heavy, lower her voice to a purr

and smile in a way that would make a monk weak. The weird thing was, Sannan-san would never do anything against it, just sit there and smile that mysterious smile and leave Shinpachi wondering how to respond.

Mostly, Shinpachi was just embarrassed.

"Ahaha, thank you Itouko-san. It's nothing really."

"Oh, no, you have great talent. And I appreciate great talents." Itouko purred and pursed her lips very discreetly, but still enough not to go unnoticed by the object of the attention.

"Ehehe..." Shinpachi scratched the back of her head, while desperately trying to find a way out of the situation, when suddenly his twin came to his rescue.

"Any seconds?" Sango stood up and everyone held out their plates.

It would keep the table occupied for a while.

ox*xo

"That went well."

Toushi said later that night, after everything was over, the visit gone and the kids asleep, and they were preparing for bed.

Sano snorted, not looking up from the article she was reading in the newest issue of the sports magazine she subscribed to.

"Yeah, but no thanks to you, you hero. You were silent the entire evening."

"I was busy enjoying the good food." The bed shifted as Toushi sat down on it and leaned towards his wife, while Sango was trying not to show how much amused she was by her husband's husky tone of voice. Toushi was now really close and she could feel his hot breath on her neck. She didn't even protest as he took the magazine away from her and exchanged it for himself. "Besides, I would never do anything to spoil your fun."

Sango smirked and eyed her armfull of Toushi.

"Well, I'm really glad to hear that."

A warm hand carressed her cheek and the quality of Toushi's look shifted a little, from mischievous to something gentler.

"You know I love you, don't you? And that I value everything you do for me."

Sango smiled and covered the hand of her husband with her own and then, angling her head, kissed the palm reassuringly.

"Yeah, I know." She said, looking directly into Toushi's midnight purple eyes.

Then the moment between them disappeared and she was smirking

again.

"Now, why don't you show me, what exactly you understand with me having fun?"

Toushi smirked right back.

ox*xo END ox*xo

2. Chapter 2

You know like in Prince of Tennis there were these Chibi episodes with the Seishun family? Where every member of the team was switched to a tag of the family? Well, it's generally the same idea here, just without the chibifieing. There's a Shinsengumi family, there's an Oni family and there are troubles and humor, I guess? Ah hell, I don't know either what hit me. Actually, I was planning to write a one-shot for halloween (a spin-off from Price of your Heart, the one where Shinkawa-chan walks in on them, actually) when this popped into my mind and didn't let go. Just...just tell me what you think.

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Episode 1 " Just a random Saturday in the Shinsengumi family.
Episode 2 " Halloween special

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[b][u]EPISODE 2[/u][/b]

"No."

"Anata."

I said no, Sango."

"I heard you, Toushi. But I know you'll say eventually yes, if I keep persuading you intently."

"NEVER! I won't allow my WIFE walking HALF-NAKED around the place where I WORK AT! FORGETT IT!"

It was a week before halloween in Hakuoki and the entire town was busy with preparations for the holiday. The local school that Toushi worked at, didn't stay out of it either and decided to organize a huge event, with all of the students and teachers participating.

Dress-code: Halloween.

And Sango had already found the perfect costume for herself. If brought out her curves perfectly, showed enough skin to be sexy and would surely win her the first price in the contest for the best halloween costume. In short, it was perfect.

Now if only Toushi would see it the same way.

"Anata, I'm not half-naked. I'll have my sports bra and shorts underneath it. My chest, arms and legs will be covered."

"You are NOT going as a MUMMY and that's FINAL!"

Toushi was red in the face, though it was hard to tell whether it was from anger or embarrassment.

Sango smirked.

"We'll see about that."

ox*xo

"So kids, tell momma what you want your halloween costume to be."

It was one afternoon roughly a week from the big event, when Sango decided that it

was time to do something for the children's costumes. So they sat down in the living room, the kids gathered around their mother, who was comfortably nestled on the couch as the rascals presented their ideas.

"I wanna be a pirate!" Heisuke, sitting in his mother's lap, exclaimed first. "I'll fight for the freedom of the seas, against the evil marines!"

Sango smiled and ruffled her little boy's head. "Alright, you'll be a pirate."

"And I'll have a sword and a black strap and a big hat!"

"Yes, you'll have all of that. So, next one." Sango still smiling at the antics of her youngest one, turned to the older brother.

"Souji, you wanted to be a vampire, if I remember correctly."

Souji, leaning on his mother's leg, looked up with pouting lips. "Naah. Tou-san is already vampire."

Ah, that was right. Toushi had surprised everyone with announcing that he would put on such a spectacular costume and unintentionally spoiled Souji's fun. That kid would never do anything to resemble his father.

Sango frowned in thought.

"Then how about a demon?"

Souji shook his head. "No, I wanna be something with a sword!"

Sano thought for a while about that "Hmm...then how about Musashi?"

Souji's eyes lit up and he threw himself in his mother's arms.
"Kaa-san, you're genius!"

Sango smiled and returning the hug, she turned to Saigo. "And you Saigo? What do you want to be?"

Saigo looked up from where she was playing with her rasetsu plushie and said with a face so serious like she was announcing she was going to war: "I'll be papa's bride."

Sango watched her daughter for several moments with a blank expression. She knew better than to argue with Saigo over something that concerned her father, because that little girl would always be on tou-san's side, no matter what. Most of the times this innocent adoration was utterly cute, but there were times when it caused a throbbing deep inside of Sango's skull.

"We'll figure something out." She said and turned to the remaining child. "And you Chizuru?"

Chizuru smiled one those smiles that had a small spark of mischief in them, that not many knew the soft-spoken girl had, and Sango knew she was going to like this one.

"I thought I'd go as a witch."

Sango's eyebrows shot into her hair in surprise.

"A witch?!"

Chizuru smiled sweetly. "Yes, kaa-san. After all, Souji keeps calling me that a lot and I thought I could make his wishes come true."

Souji pulled a face that was supposed to be worried and Sango grinned.

"You'll be a perfect witch!"

Souji then turned to his mother again. "And you kaa-san? Did tou-san approve of your idea to go as a mummy?" The boy looked very hopeful. "It'd be so cool!"

Sango smiled evilly and patted her son's head. "But Souji. Since when do I need tou-san's approval to do something?"

Souji's face split into a grin, while Chizuru and Heisuke burst out laughing.

ox*xo

"I can't believe I actually let you out of the house like this!"

Toushi exclaimed when the family got out of the car in front of the school building, the evening of the school's halloween event.

"Oh, anata. You couldn't stop me even if you tried. I have a key and I have a car."

Toushi was near hysterics, which Sango found extremely amusing and utterly hilarious.

â€žWhat are my colleagues gonna say?! What will the schoolboard think?! The vice-director's wife, HALF-NAKED!"

â€žTou-san, chill! Kaa-san's hot, that's what they'll think!" Souji, dressed in his bloody-samurai-that-was-supposed-to-be Musashi get-up interjected and the pirate king Heisuke nodded eagerly.

â€žKaa-san's SO COOL!"

â€žIt really suits her, tou-san." Chizuru, smiling shyly in contrast to her rather daring costume, voiced her agreement placidly.

Saigo didn't say anything, just stood next to her father, holding his hand, looking absolutely convincing as a bride of a vampire lord, dressed in an all-black lacey dress.

Clearly over-voted, Toushi sighed heavily and cast a glance at his wife.

â€žSuits, or not, it's just..."

Bandages were covering Sango's chest and middle, but left her belly uncovered, suggestively accenting the rich bosom and sharp hips, and temptingly presenting the taut abdominals graced with a pale scar, the reminder of a complicated birth, which she painted red for the occasion.

Wrapped around her upper arms, shoulders and tights, they gave a nice glimpse of the strong muscles hidden beneath them, that flexed every time the woman moved.

Inconspicuous white ballerinas were covering her feet, since she didn't dare to walk completely bare-footed in the cold of the last night of October.

â€žI was just thinking kaa-san," Chizuru spoke up. â€žAren't you cold?"

Sango smiled gently at her daughter. â€žI'll be fine as soon as we get inside."

â€žThen let's do that." The father of the family said and started walking towards the school building rather hurriedly, hoping for all the world that no one noticed the flush on his face and recognized it for what it was. Sango was too hot for her age.

ox*xo

Once inside, they got almost immediately sucked into the huge crowd that was there. People were everywhere and all were dressed in spectacular, fantastic costumes. Blood and pumpkins were scattered everywhere and wherever you looked there was an attraction in the spirit of halloween. There was even a horror cabinet somewhere and the boys were already all-too-eager to visit it.

â€žAlright." Toushi spoke as they found a small quiet spot. â€žSince everyone wants to see something different, we should split up. The

main program starts in one hour in the gym, but you have to be there earlier, especially since you're contributing to the program. Don't come late and don't get into trouble."

"Yes, tou-san." They all chorused and immediately after that, the boys disappeared into the direction of the horror cabinet. Toushi said he needed to talk with the halloween event comitee about something and Saigo, never letting go of Toushi's hand, went with him. That left Sango and Chizuru, standing there and shaking their heads in amusement.

"Come on, let's find your uncle. He called me twenty minutes ago, said he'd just arrived. Knowing him, he's probably already found the bufet."

Chizuru chuckled. "You might be right, kaa-san."

ox*xo

They found Shinpachi, dressed as a werewolf, next to the fried shrimps and after they took a small snack, they hit it off together. On their stroll through the 'halloween market' they met Souji and Heisuke, who looked a little pale around the nose and pretty shaken up. Sango wondered what encountered them in the horror cabinet, but she supposed that as long as there weren't any lasting psychological effects, it didn't do them wrong to get a little traumatized.

They hung around for a little while longer, untill it was nearly time to gather for the main event. They were on their way to the gym, when they met another of their neighbours.

"Hot costume, mrs. Coach!"

Heading towards them was the oldest Oni boy, dressed in dark clothes, that somehow resembled a hunting get-up. A gun was proudly strapped to the left hip and a crossbow was dangling against his back.

"Shiranui-kun." Sango greeted her trainee and looked him over.
"Let me guess," hunter."

Shiranui grinned. "Almost. I'm a vampire hunter." Sango laughed and watched with eyes sparkling with amusement as Shiranui came to stand right in front of her and leaned towards her in what wanted to be an intimate whisper. "And I heard that a Vampire was around here, somewhere, taking innocent maidens as their brides and molesting handsom mummies?"

Sango's mouthwinkles pulled into an evil smirk. "What a coincidence. I know where you could find one. We were just heading that way."

Shiranui smirked back. "Oh really? Well then, will you let me join your little group of wanderers?"

"Oh, I don't know, I have to ask my companions first."

But before Sango could turn to ask the merry fellowship, a shout interrupted them and suddenly they were standing face to face with the Devil himself.

"Chizuru! Come with me and become the queen of the Underworld next to my side! Marry me!"

Shiranui groaned and Chizuru took a step back, while he eyes were widened in utter disbelief at the sight of Kazama standing there, looking a weird mix of devil, vampire and sex puppet.

Sango hid her laughter behind coughs, while Shinpachi looked torn between being annoyed and being amused.

Souji and Heisuke were openly laughing.

"Chizuru-chan!" A voice called from behind them and as they turned, they saw Sen-chan, dressed in a dark-red medieval dress with a lot of frills and laces, hurrying towards them. "Don't listen to that idiot!" She arrived slightly out of breath and Sango noted that she had to be wearing high-heels, because there was no way that girl had grown almost four inches since yesterday. He also noticed the small golden crown on her head, adorned with red stones.

She had to be some kind of princess then.

And if Sango was to judge it from the red get-up, she'd have guessed it was supposed to be Bloody Mary.

Sango smiled. It did look surely nice on Sen-chan.

"Kazama has been going on about making you his bride since the school announced this event."

An evil idea came to Sango.

"Oh, I don't know, Sen-chan." The mother said. "In the Medieval Ages, witches were considered to be the worshippers and the brides of Satan."

Chizuru shot her an utterly mortified glance, while Sen-chan looked shocked about the betrayal. The boys were grinning evilly and Shiranui and Shinpachi looked like they had real trouble suppress an outburst of laughter.

Kazama looked like he hit the jackpot.

He seized Chizuru's and gave her an intense, heated stare. "You heard her. Now, come with me."

The blood drained from Chizuru's face for a moment and then it rushed back like her life depended on it.

"What...?!"

Sango, although still amused, finally decided to come to her daughter's rescue.

"Now, now, kids. We have strict orders not to miss the main event and as a member of the student council you shouldn't either, Kazama-kun. And Shiranui must still slay the vampire. You can return to your plans later."

Kazama looked thoughtfull for a moment, then finally let go of Chizuru.

"I admitt, that you're right, Shinsengumi-san." He looked at Chizuru. "Accompany me then to my duties, my bride."

Chizuru, who had began to look relieved, was instantly on alert again.

"What?!" she cast a pleading glance to her mother, but Sango just smiled at her and so she was lead away by her 'lord and master'.

Shinpachi shook his furry head and leaned towards his bandaged sister. "You are really enjoying this, aren't you? You have a fetish for seeing your daughter suffer, don't you?" he said in a hushed voice, so that they wouldn't be overheard by the youths, or the kids.

"I have many fetishes." Sango whispered back, winking at her brother and then she turned to the others and said out loud: "We should go too. The event starts in a short while."

ox*xo

As they arrived, the gym was already getting full with families waiting for their kids to go on stage.

Before Sango could even say anything, Souji and Heisuke hurried quickly backstage, Shinpachi following them to make sure they got there on time, while Sen-chan made herself on the way of finding Chizuru and playing chaperone.

And suddenly, for a few quiet moments, Sango found herself, save Shiranui, alone.

She stoped a few feet from the door that lead to the hall, closed her eyes and breathed deeply in and out.

The hall was empty and the only noise was coming from inside the gym.

"Do you hear that?" she asked Shiranui.

"Hear what?" Shiranui asked in a mildly confused voice.

"Silence."

Shiranui let out a small chuckle, but other than that didn't say anything. Sango enjoyed the quiet for a while longer before she finally opened her eyes and turning to Shiranui, spoke.

"So, I suppose you're gonna find now that vamp and slay him, huh?"

Shiranui was standing less than a feet away from her and was smiling amusedly.

"You know what? I think I'd rather enjoy the silence with you for a

little while longer." With that said, he leaned himself on the wall, just beside the door.

"Siblings can be tiring, right?" Sango asked and leaned herself onto the wall just beside Shiranui.

Her trainee looked at her with smiling eyes. "Just as four kids, a husband and a brother, I suppose."

Sango smiled, but didn't reply.

For a while they stood there like that, but then the sound of approaching footsteps reached them and the door banged open loudly, disturbing the peace.

Sango turned her head towards the intruder just in time to see her husband's stunned face split into a raging expression.

"WHERE THE HELL ARE YOU?! WE ARE ABOUT TO START!"

Sango just raised calmly her eyebrows and whispered in a low voice to Shiranui, so that he rhusband wouldn't hear: "Seems like the vampire found you, before you found him, Hunter D."

"I'm not so sure it was me whom he was looking for." Shiranui whispered back, but then Toushi was already standing in front of Sango, arms firmly crossed on his chest, apparently awaiting some sort of explanation.

Sango looked at her husband calmly and said without batting an eye: "We were right here, enjoying the few moments of peace."

At the 'we', Toushi's head snapped towards her companion.

"YOU!"

"Yo, Vice-director-san."

"GET INSIDE!" Toushi hollered and pointed towards the gym.

Shiranui raised his arms in defense. "Yo, chill, man. I'm going, I'm going." He turned to his trainer. "See ya later, Mrs. Coach."

Sango only nodded at him, her eyes not leaving her husband as she stared at Toushi angrily. As soon as Shiranui disappeared behind the door of the hall, she snapped.

"What the hell was that about?! Why are you so rude to my trainee?! Can you tell me what-"

She was cut off as Toushi seized her arm and with a resolute "Come!" he started pulling her away from the gym.

"Hey, what are you doing?! I wasn't finished...HEY!"

They stoped by a door that Toushi yanked open and suddenly Sango was being thrown inside.

"WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU DOING?!"

The door closed behind her husband and suddenly they were alone in the dark room, that could have only been the PE cabinet, where the various utensils for PE were kept. There was the shuffling of clothes as Toushi talked in a hushed, hurried voice.

"...The entire time, not knowing anything...wondering who would jump you...found you outside with that pervert...too hot...can't stand it any longer!"

The more Sango listened the more confused she was.

"What the hell are you talking about? I don't understand a word you're -"

But her husband cut her off once again, this time silencing her in a very affective way.

Sango's eyes went wide as Toushi's lips crushed her own in an urgent kiss and she gasped as hot hands grasped the soft parts of her body possessively. A heated body pushed against her and she could feel something hard and burning pressing against her middle.

She moaned into the kiss and tried to push the man away, but he held her only firmer.

Only after several moments, when Sango's skin felt equally hot and flushed as Toushi's, did he let her go.

"Mine!" Toushi gasped and look at his wife with such a possessive heat, that it made Sango's toes curl and words completely leave her.

"Mine!" Toushi repeated and claimed her lips in another heated kiss.

When that one ended too, they were left gasping for air, not being able to do anything but stare into each other's eyes, neither of them really knowing what to say, untill Sango finally found her voice.

"What...was that?"

Toushi gulped in an attempt to moisten his dry throat and deep, purple eyes locked with amber hues.

"Since we arrived, I have been in the gym. I didn't know what was with you, or if you were alright, or whether anyone tried anything. I know you can take care of yourself, but it just wouldn't leave me alone. My beautiful, sexy wife out there alone...I was anxious, nervous, worried and yes, hard." Toushi admitted and slowly Snago started to understand.

"And then I was just standing there, completely oblivious to your inner turmoil and you..." she moved her hand to rest over the bulge in her husband's pants, "couldn't stand it any longer." And she squeezed.

Toushi's eyes shut tightly together and a hiss escaped him.

"Yeah." He breathed out and Sango eyed him.

"We'll miss the show."

"I know."

A look.

Heat.

Fire.

HIS.

Sango smirked.

ox*xo

"Now look what you did."

"Hmm?"

"You ruined my costume."

"Hmph."

"You don't even feel sorry, do you?"

"Hmm..."

"And I worked [i]so hard[/i] on it..."

An eye opened lazily and a purple orb cast a glazed, tired glance at her.

"Are you complaining? Because I can still offer you a compensation."

For a full second Sango paused from where she was trying to adjust her bandages into the state they were in before the encounter, and turned to look at her husband blankly, before she broke into a snort.

"Oh no, thank you. I think I had enough of [i]compensation[/i] for today."

Toushi smirked. "What a pity...I was hoping we could go for another round."

Sango laughed. "Oh, I finally remember why I married you."

Toushi's smirk grew wider. "That's great to hear."

Sango returned to adjusting the bandages. "We missed the main event."

Toushi smiled knowingly. "I'm sure our kids did well."

Sango looked at her husband again, smiling gently, before she nodded. "Of course, anata." Then her smile turned into a proud smirk. "They're our children, after all."

Toushi snickered and they both leaned into a kiss.

ox*xo

"This was an eventful halloween." Sango said, smirking into herself, as the family headed towards their car, after the show had ended. Then, turning to her husband, she added. "We should repeat it sometime."

Toushi cleared his throat.

This went unnoticed by the kids, who were all talking about which of them had the best costume and best scene.

"My costume was better, Souji!"

"But I was loads better on the stage! You were just stammering, Heisuke!"

"So what, Saigo barely talked!"

Saigo, proudly walking at her papa's side, looked at her brothers. "I was papa's bride."

"We heard!" Heisuke cried out. "You announced it to the entire hall!"

Souji turned to his mother, who had her arm around Chizuru's shoulder and they were talking together quietly.

"Kaa-san, you tell us which was the best one!" Sango turned to her son, smiling proudly. "All of you were great."

"Yeah, but who was the best?!"

Sango smiled. "I'd say, that each of you were the best in something different. Souji's introduction was very spectacular and smart, while Heisuke's was funny and entertaining. You all have different strengths."

The boys looked like they were contemplating this.

Meanwhile the family reached their car and Sango opened it.

Toushi nodded. "Kaa-san's right." Then he turned to his little bride. "But the cutest was Saigo."

The small girl beamed at her father and her small arms encircled his waist in an affectionate hug. Toushi ruffled his daughter's hair and put her inside the car.

"There you go, sweetie."

Souji, Heisuke and Chizuru also crawled into the vehicle and Toushi

sat inside, to start it.

Sango turned to her brother, who had his own car parked a few lots away, but before she could say anything, Shinpachi spoke first.

"I thought they had you there, for a minute."

Sango raised an eyebrow confusedly. "Huh?"

Shinpachi snickered. "You two weren't at the show."

Sango eyed her brother with a smile. "You noticed."

Shinpachi nodded. "Yeah. I kept looking for you, but I couldn't spot you. I thought that maybe you're just sitting somewhere, where I can't see you, but that obviously was not the case."

"And how, pray tell, do you know that?"

Shinpachi hesitated for a small moment, before he said: "Your bandages. Your bandages gave you away."

Sango frowned questioningly and Shinpachi elaborated.

"You tied them the other way. They were right to left before. Now they're left to right. And your paint's smeared."

Sango's eyes widened and she glanced down. She hadn't even noticed...

"...It was dark."

"I figured. The PE cabinets are never well lit."

Sango gave her brother a stunned glance, before her eyes narrowed suspiciously. "Alright, how much do you know?"

Shinpachi smiled evilly. "Enough to blackmail you in front of your kids for the rest of your life."

Sango gritted her teeth and Shinpachi laughed heartily, putting an arm around his sister's shoulder.

"Consider it sibling love, bro'!"

Sango sighed. "I pray that in the next life I'll be an only child."

Shinpachi patted her shoulder, still snickering to himself.

"See you tomorrow."

And with that her twin headed for his own car.

Sango, still shaking her head sat into the passenger's seat and secured the seat-belt.

Toushi looked at his wife sideways, started the engine, then slowly pulled out of the lot.

"You took your time. What did your brother want?"

"Shinpachi just needed to inform me of a few things about your PE cabinet."

A shiver ran down Toushi's spine and his teeth gritt. "That bastard..."

For some reason Sango found herself smiling. "Let him. He has to get his victories somewhere." She then glanced to the backseat and noted, that their kids were either dozing, or spacing out, so she found it safe to put a hand onto her husband's tigh and leaning close, she whispered intimately: "You already have me."

Toushi risked another glance at his wife, eyes sparkling, mischievous smirk playing on the handsom lips.

"Oh yeah. You're mine and your brother can go fuck himself."

Smirking, Sango leaned back into her seat.

"Alright, but [i]you[/i] are the one who's telling him that."

Toushi was snickering the entire ride back.

ox*xo END ox*xo

3. Chapter 3

Yet another chapter of the wonderfully dysfunctional Shinsengumi family. I know I should be writing Price, but all it took me was to read chapter 4 and Interlude 45 of Reimeirku Harada route and I'd been writing this. (And besides, that piece is coming along quite well, too.) I hope you enjoy. And if the aforementioned route isn't hint enough: It starrs Ryuunosuke x333

Word count: 6515

>Rating: Not sure, but I think general audiences this time.

>Warnings: same as before. Gender swap, questionable education methods, cursing...

Summary: His boss uses Shinpachi as a babysitter. The Shinsengumi kids get entangled in a romantic triangle. Sango falls in love (Well, more like she gets her fair share of entertainment, but that's not the point now).

EDIT: After getting up today and scrolling through the chapter, I decided that I needed to rewrite and edit a few parts. I've worked on it the entire day yesterday and at the end of it, I didn't have any more energy left to edit it. Maybe I shouldn't have posted it then, but I guess I was too ecstatic, that I wrote another part of the Shinsengumi family, that I couldn't not post it. Forgive my enthusiasm?

EPISODE 3

It was yet another sunny day in the fictive, small town of Hakuouki, busy as every other workday was, but slowing down gradually, as lunch approached.

In the Shinsengumi household Sango was finishing preparations for lunch, enjoying herself in the quiet of the house, as everyone was at school, working or studying, leaving her alone at home. Shinpachi was at his own house, getting some work done, but as every workday, he'd come over 12 o'clock sharp, precise as a clockwork, and they'd have lunch together.

"Hmm, is this pepper still good? Ah who cares. There."

It was now shortly before twelve and Sango just turned off the stove, finished with cooking. Still having a little time left, she decided to gloss through a few articles in the newest issue of her favorite sports-magazine. But as the clock ticked by and no one came, she didn't even notice how she made it through half of the magazine, until suddenly her stomach churned.

A surprised look at the clock revealed that it was edging close to 1 pm and her brother was nowhere in sight.

"What the hell?!"

Shinpachi never missed lunch. No, actually Shinpachi never missed any kind of meal, period. This was highly unusual. Something had to be amiss.

Without sparing it another thought, Sango stood up and headed to her brother's house.

x*x

Shinpachi answered a few moments after the second ring, but not before a few crashing and tripping sounds could be heard from behind the closed doors.

"What is it...Sango!" The blue eyes of her brother looked at her in mild surprise. "What are you doing here?!"

Sango eyed him with a deadpan face.

"Lunch? It's almost three quarters to one."

"What?!" Shinpachi's eyes darted towards the grandfather clock a few steps from them. "It's already this late?! I'm sorry! I didn't notice..."

He gave her an apologetic smile, but Sango only frowned. This was more than unusual, this was downright concerning. Shinpachi's stomach worked like a clock, knowing exactly when it was time for lunch, dinner, breakfest, brunch and a snack. Consequently, Shinpachi missing a meal meant something was fundamentally different, if not wrong with her brother. Slightly worried now, Sango tried to steal a glance inside the house, to see if she could find any hints for the cause of this strange behavior, before eyeing her brother suspiciously.

"Is everything alright?"

Shinpachi waved his hand. "Yeah, yeah, fine, I'm just kinda busy. I'm behind schedule with work and Serizawa will have my head if I don't get some stuff finished 'till Friday. And then there's..."

But before Shinpachi could get any further in the explanation, from behind the living room doors a mop of blue appeared, and suddenly each and every of Sango's questions were answered.

"Anooo...Nagakura-san...? I'm hungry."

She would have recognized that adorable little pout among a millions.

"Ryuunosuke-kun!"

Impossibly huge amber eyes, even huger than Heisuke's, or Saigo's turned to look at her confusedly and Sango crouched down while Ryuunosuke approached her with slow, careful steps.

"Hey, don't you remember me?"

Finally recognition flashed through those huge eyes and a tiny finger, not unlike Heisuke's, pointed at her.

"You're that hot wench who hit me in the head for telling the pigtail girl, that she was a boy after she punched me!"

With 'pigtail girl' he probably meant Saigo and Sango was about to correct that little detail in the little boy's recollection of the last time that Serizawa-san had left his son in Shinpachi's care, when her brother cut in.

"Ryuunosuke, what did you just call my sister?"

Huh?

Sango had to go back in the conversation a little, before she understood what Shinpachi was getting at. She hadn't even noticed the pejorative word, completely used to such expressions.

Ryuunosuke didn't seem to realize it himself, as he looked with confused eyes at Shinpachi, before the man elaborated.

"You just said 'hot wench', didn't you?"

Ryuunosuke didn't look even remotely close to sorry. "Is that bad?" he asked. "Because Dad called her that too. He said Nagakura-san's sister is a hot wench and when I asked him if that meant that she's on fire, he said no, it meant she was attractive. I thought that's a good thing. I asked him if that meant that Oume-san's also a hot wench, but he just told me to stop asking stupid questions and go do whatever."

Sango couldn't help it, she just had to laugh.

Go figure, that Serizawa-san wouldn't hold his tongue even in front of his son! And the adorable pout that accompanied Ryuunosuke's explanation, along with the priceless expression on Shinpachi's face

were simply too much to bear at once.

â€žHey, nee-san, what's so funny?"

Sango couldn't hold back, simply couldn't.

â€žShinpachi's face kinda is!"

Ryuunosuke looked up at the man and nodded, pout not leaving his face.

â€žYeah, you're right nee-san, it is."

Shinpachi's expression turned even funnier.

Finally, with one last chuckle, Sango decided to spare her brother further nerve wreckage and stood up.

â€žYou didn't tell me that you had Ryuunosuke-kun over again."

The first time had been during summer break, when Serizawa-san had been away from town for business and Oume-san couldn't afford to take a week off from work, to look after Ryuunosuke the entire day, so Shinpachi's boss had unceremoniously announced to Sango's brother, that he'd be taking care of Ryuu during daytime and no, that didn't mean he wasn't supposed to keep the deadline.

Sango had taken pity on her brother then and took Ryuunosuke in, so he could play with her kids the entire day.

He'd had a rather fun time with Saigo.

Well, at least until Ryuunosuke had been careless enough to say that Toushi looked like a devil and he could 'already see the horns coming out'.

Saigo had punched him then.

And Ryuunosuke told Saigo she punched like a boy.

Which wasn't entirely untrue, but the sad look that suddenly appeared in Saigo's eyes after Ryuu had said that, made Sango act without thinking first, as so often. Before she realized, that it was the son of her brother's boss in front of her, she'd chucked him over the head and bellowed at him to apologize.

Shinpachi had been on the verge of a heart attack when he'd heard about the incident, but Serizawa-san didn't seem to care much, saying that the brat had probably deserved it.

But that aside, it had been a nice day and one pouty look from those amber eyes was all it took for Sango to be head over heels with Ryuunosuke. And if Sango was entirely honest with herself, the kid reminded her too much of how she used to be, when she was his age. Bratty and full of smart remarks, pouting at the unfairness of the world and why had she have to be the only sister and the youngest sibling at the same time.

Needless to say, Ryuunosuke had made quite an impression.

It was Shinpachi's voice that brought her back to reality.

"I didn't have when to tell you. Oume-san had been here just this morning, saying that Ryuunosuke's class was on a field trip, that Serizawa-san didn't allow him to go on and that she couldn't keep him at the tailor's shop and her boss didn't give her the entire week off, and since everything went so well the last time, Serizawa-san said he could stay with me while she worked and she hoped it wasn't too much of an inconvenience, and that she was sorry she didn't inform me beforehand, but Serizawa-san had shared it with her just an hour ago, and so on. I couldn't really say no. And since then everything had been upside down and I didn't have the time to even call you."

Sango nodded.

"That's fine, I get it. Sounds like your boss expects Himalayan tasks from you again."

Shinpachi looked like he was near tears.

Sango smiled.

"Look, how about this? I take Ryuunosuke, while you try to get as much work done as humanly possible. It's no problem for me, the house's empty. I only have to pick up the twins in two hours and then we can go to the playground. Souji and Chizuru won't be home 'till after four, Toushi 'till six. I can even bring you your lunch over and you can eat it whenever you feel like you've got the time."

Judging by the relieved look Shinpachi made, her brother agreed with the plan 100 %.

"Oume-san wanted to pick him up at five." Was the only reply he gave, before he gently nudged Ryuunosuke towards her.

"Ryuunosuke-chan, you'll stay with Sango for a while now, yes? You'll behave and you won't call her anything...anything your father calls her, is that clear?"

Ryuunosuke nodded.

Shinpachi smiled and ruffled the blue top.

"And I'll let you in on a little secret." he bent down, while Ryu's eyes sparked with interest. Then Shinpachi whispered secretly, making Sango suppress another chuckle, pretending she didn't hear them. Boys. "Sango has tons of food cooked."

Ryuunosuke's hand was in Sango's before Shinpachi finished the sentence, huge eyes shining with hope.

It took only a few more moments for Shinpachi to get Ryu's stuff together that Oume-san had left with the boy that morning and then they were headed to the Shinsengumi household.

ox*xo

As promised, Sango brought one share of lunch over to her brother's,

before returning home and fully engaging herself to fooling around with the adorable boy. But mostly Ryuunosuke just kept quietly drawing, only occassionally looking up to ask Sango something, or another. He was also very supple, doing what Sango asked him to do, even if he more often than not voiced he'd be rather doing something else. But he still did what he was asked.

While he was completely adorable, he was a strange boy, Sango thought.

He rarely smiled.

A while later they went to pick Heisuke and Saigo up from the elementary. Heisuke seemed ecstatic that Ryuu was visiting again and even Ryuunosuke seemed to cheer up a bit, as he saw his friends.

Neither of the boys noticed the slight flush that appeared on Saigo's cheeks.

And since Saigo didn't have kendo today, they went home right away.

After eating their regular portion of the lunch, the twins sat down to do their home work and Ryuunosuke settled for drawing again. After doing quick work on the dishes, Sango tried to peak at the picture, but Ryuunosuke noticed her and covered the sheet with his tiny body.

"It's not done yet!"

Obviously not having any other choice, Sango surrendered, holding up her hands and smiling to herself. She then settled for helping the kids with their homework.

Saigo was finished first.

Then the little girl silently sat down next to Ryuunosuke " who was still endorsed in drawing the obvious masterpiece " and...well, it was hard to determine what she wanted, but to Sango it seemed like she was waiting for something.

Maybe she wanted Ryuu to speak first?

But Ryuunosuke didn't.

He just kept stealing, what were probably supposed to be secret glances at Saigo, while the little girl just silently sat there, helplessly red.

Sango had the feeling she'll melt, if this continued any longer.

Thankfully Heisuke was soon finished with his homework and they could go to the playground. Sango needed a little air, from all the cuteness.

Saigo's albino bunny, Ryuunosuke's ball and most of Heisuke's stuff secured in a duffel bag, they headed out.

There weren't many kids on the playground yet, so Sango sat down onto her favorite spot, one of the old swing that have been there for the last twenty years (and they still held out her weight), while she watched the kids play animatedly.

"Ryuu, you can borrow this one!" Heisuke, ever the game-maker, announced as he gave Ryuunosuke one of his cars. "And Touko can start the race!" Saigo's ears perked up, at the mention of her snow bunny and Heisuke quickly explained. "In cool movies girls always start races! They have to stand between the two cars and wave!"

It seemed that Souji had been watching 'Fast and Furious' with Heisuke again. Sango made a mental note to give her oldest son a small piece of mind, once they got home. Saigo however relented and Touko got to be the one to start the race.

Sango watched them for a long time, as she remembered the days when she had been their age and she didn't even notice how she started comparing them to the kids from her childhood. She didn't even notice how a man approached them, before a thin scarf wasn't dangling in front of her face.

"Here. As a thanks for taking care of Ryuunosuke-chan."

Said the familiar voice and Sango looked up to smile at her brother.

"Shinpachi. I thought you were working." She took the piece of cloth and regarded it. It was thin and light, soft to touch and the pattern went just so with a blouse she bought recently. "Thank you. It's beautiful."

Shinpachi sat down on the swing next to her, while she wrapped the scarf around her neck right away, then turning to her brother for compliments.

"You're welcome. I know you like accessories and to dress up and it wasn't too expensive." He regarded Sango for a moment. "Nice. It suits you. I saw it as I went to buy myself some coke." He held up the bottle with the dark liquid. "I'll need the drink later. But for now I'm taking a small break and I thought I would come to see how you were faring. I didn't find you at home, so I figured you were here."

Sango smiled. "We're just fine. The kids are ecstatic that Ryuu is over again." She chuckled amusedly. "You should have seen how Saigo blushed."

"Must have been incredibly cute."

"You missed a lot." They watched how another girl joined the round and hugged Ryuu, before Sango turned to her brother. "So, how's work?"

"Fine. If I pull an all-nighter, I can probably catch up with the schedule. That's what the coke's for."

"You could have just made coffee, you know."

"I needed the break. And I wanted to check on Ryuu, see if he was

sprouting bumps on his head yet." Shinpachi looked at her pointedly and Sango laughed.

"None yet." She said. "If you want to, I can take him during daytime, so you don't fall behind again. The kids will be happy and it's no problem for me."

"Bro, that would really rock."

Sango smirked. "It's a deal then!"

They watched the kids some more. The small girl who joined them earlier was merrily chatting with Saigo, while Ryuу just sat pouting with an oblivious Heisuke.

"You know what?" Shinpachi spoke suddenly.

"What?"

"Ryuunosuke-chan keeps reminding me of you a lot. Same pout, some defiance, same brattiness. He could seriously be yours. Only difference, the when someone upsets him, he doesn't use his fists."

"No, we already have Saigo to do that." Sango replied, not letting Shinpachi in, that she had thought the same thing mere hours ago. "But suppose you're right."

"You used to be like that. Stand-offish, bratty, always arguing with everyone, getting into fights...Wanting nothing else than to prove to everyone, that you aren't a crybaby and that you aren't a girl." Shinpachi snorted. "I think you broke Mom's heart there. She'd attempted five times to have a girl she could dress-up and go shopping with and the only girl she ever had, ended up being more boyish than any of the boys."

Sango laughed silently, memories flashing through her mind, while Shinpachi continued.

"But you liked it, didn't you? Dressing up. And shopping and being all girly and nice. But you never showed it, afraid of what we'd say, or what the boys on the playground would think. That you were just like any other girl." Shinpachi smiled fondly. "But you never were. I always thought it was the coolest about you. You never cried, never threw a tantrum when you were hurt...you were always so strong. And your right hook had been really cool. You always stood out."

The smile on Sango's face gained a sad quality, as she recalled the less pleasant memories from her childhood.

"Yeah, I stood out, alright, being the only one playing alone, because everyone feared me..."

Shinpachi smiled understandingly.

"Sitting on a swing, all alone, trying your best not to cry, so that no one could call you a girl, on top of everything."

Sango chuckled lightly, remembering that.

â€žAnd then you'd come, demanding why I look like I was about to bawl, like some stupid girl and who did that, because they were gonna be sorry."

â€žYou never wanted to tell me..."

Sango smiled crookedly, finishing instead of her brother.

â€žBut you ended up pulling it out of me anyway. And then you'd end up in a fight, hopelessly overpowered and I'd have to help you. Then we'd both end up beat up and aching and Mom would fret over us. And still no one would play with me."

â€žI did."

â€žYou were my brother, you didn't count." She looked into those kind, blue eyes. â€žIt wasn't only until later I found out, it was all that counted."

They smiled at each other.

â€žI never told you, Sango, but I have always been really proud to have a sister like you."

A moment of silence passed between them.

â€žSis'?"

Sango startled slightly at the rare nickname.

â€žWhat is it?"

â€žYour eyes are wet."

With a start Sango realized, that they indeed were. But there was no way, she was admitting that not even to her twin.

â€žYou must be imagining things. Me? Crying? I thought we'd already established I don't do crying. It'd totally smear my make-up."

Shinpachi smirked, but said nothing, turning his gaze to the playing kids instead. But out of the corner of his eyes he caught his little sister subtly wiping at her eyes, not to let the nostalgic tears fall.

For a while there was silence between them, until Sango spoke.

â€žHeisuke's like you."

â€žHuh?" Shinpachi asked stupidly, the context of their earlier conversation not coming to his mind immediately.

â€žOut of all my kids, Heisuke has his genes entirely from our side of the family. He especially resembles you. He even looks like you, save for the aqua eyes." Sango elaborated. â€žHe's got the same grin and playfulness too. A small bundle of energy, just like you used to be." After a second of thought, Sango corrected herself. â€žLike you

still are."

Shinpachi laughed. "Is that so? Hmm..." He thought about it for a few moments. "But Souji on the other hand, is your carbon copy. His eyes might be a bit more green and his hair a bit more auburn, but his personality is exactly like you."

Sango smiled. "Not exactly. He has several streaks that remind me of his father so much it's almost eerie." Sango thought for a second. "But if Souji is like me, then Saigo is like her father. She looks like him and acts like him. It's like having a chibi female version of my husband at home, it's almost too cute to bear."

"Oh, but she has a lot of your behavior patterns." Shinpachi said contemplatingly. "Sometimes she just gets this peculiar look, or a gesture she does and it's like I'm looking at you. The way she throws punches is also a lot like your style."

Sango hummed. "She's the exact opposite of Souji in this. Maybe that's why they get along so well!"

They both laughed.

"Chizuru's the black sheep."

"Oh?"

"Yeah, she completely takes after her grandmother, from her father's side. I saw some old photos of okaa-san, it was like looking at Chizuru."

"In other words, she's just like Heisuke, just from the other side."

Sango thought about it. "You're right!"

Shinpachi smirked. "All in all, I think Ryuu would fit perfectly into our family."

"You think your boss would mind if we adopted him?"

"I'm not gonna ask him."

Sango laughed at Shinpachi's definite tone. "Hey, you can't blame me! Ryuu's too cute for his own good!"

That was when Heisuke's voice carried over to them and they started paying attention to their surroundings again.

"Hey Saigo! Saaaaigooooo! Aw maaan, what's with you?!"

Instantly on alert, they both looked at the direction of the youngest daughter, but what they saw, was one of the sweetest sights that ever presented itself to them.

Saigo was sitting on the ground, lifelessly playing with the albino plushie Touko, while Ryuunosuke was a few feet away, talking quietly to the girl from earlier, their faces burning, both of them doing their best not to look at each other, but stealing 'very subtle' glances every now and then.

"Aw will you look at that? We've got out first love triangle and it's not even Chizuru who's involved." Sango pursed her lips at the cuteness, while Shinpachi was snickering quietly beside her.

"How horrible." he said, mock serious. "At this rate Saigo's heart will be completely shattered."

"Who's that girl anyway?" Sango wondered out loud. "Ryuu's friend?"

"I think that's Kosuzu-chan. Oume-san mentioned her a few times, said she was Ryuunosuke's friend." He smirked. "She never said how serious it was."

Sango smiled sideways. "How tragic."

That was when Shinpachi's cell-phone went off and a brief look at the called-id put an expression of slight shock on his face, before he hurried to pick it up.

"Yes, Oume-san!"

When Sango heard that name, her eyes shot to the watch around her wrist, which confirmed, that yes, it was indeed shortly before 5 o'clock.

"I'm sorry, I didn't realize how late it was, we're on the playground nearby." She heard her brother say. "It's down the street and across the park. You'll see us when you get to the memorial."

He hung up and not five minutes later, he was waving at the blond woman, who appeared at the white marble pillar, in the middle of the small park.

Sango had met Serizawa-san's girlfriend on occasions, but she never ceased to be amazed by the sheer elegance and beauty of the other woman. Where Sango was tall, Oume-san was petite. Where Sango was full of flesh and sharp curves, Oume-san had delicate lines. Where Sango was chiselled like stone, Oume-san was a flowing frame, like a gentle current.

High cheekbones on a round face, sensual lips pained a gentle pink, purple eyes framed by subtle eyeshades and long lashes, blond hair tied in a loose, but perfect knot, a few strands hanging sensually into her face, shading her features with a touch of mystery. A subtle lavendel blouse, the top two buttons undone, letting them catch a glimpse of the silver necklace gracing her pale skin, and a long lilac skirt to compliment her figure and elegance.

If there was one thing that could not be denied about Serizawa Kamo, it was his perfect taste of woman.

Oume-san reached them and they both stood up, and Shinpachi bowed.

"I'm sorry for the trouble. I guess, I wasn't looking at the clock much today." He said, scratching the back of his head embarrassedly.

â€žOh, no, Nagakura-san. I have to apologize for the trouble. In Serizawa-san's name too."

â€žAh, please." Shinpachi waved it off. â€žI ended up dumping it on my sister, anyway."

Sango nodded in greeting and Oume bowed again.

â€žIt seems I have to thank you too."

â€žOh, not at all. Ryuunosuke-kun's a darling, I did it with pleasure."

Oume-san smiled with thanks and called after the little boy.

â€žRyuunosuke-kun!"

Ryuu looked up and as he noticed her, she waved at him. The little boy ran over to them and came to stand right in front of Oume-san, looking indecisive, like he didn't know how to talk to the fine woman, but Sango supposed it was natural. Kids needed time before they could determine where to place a person. Especially if the woman that was dating one the father, wasn't their mother, Sango thought.

â€žHi!"

â€žHello..."

But Oume-san seemed to be doing everything right. She wasn't too clingy, leaving Ryuu the space the boy needed, but at the same time she was nice to him, showing the kid that she was no threat.

â€žDid you have fun today?"

Ryuu brightened at the question and nodded a bit hesitantly, but with a small, happy smile on the round face and Oume patted his hair affectionately.

â€žYou seem spirited today. I'm glad..."

â€žI'll go get his stuff, to save you the trouble." Shinpachi announced and Sango handed him the keys.

â€žLiving room." Was all she said and her brother nodded.

Then they noticed Ryuu eyeing them with huge, concerned eyes.

Shinpachi caught on right away.

â€žI swear, I'll handle your drawings with the utmost care." He said, holding up his right hand in an almost ceremonial oath. â€žThere won't be the tiniest crease on them, I promise."

Ryuu eyed him for a moment contemplatively, before nodding.

With that Shinpachi sprinted off and Oume-san let go of Ryuu.

"Go say bye to your friends."

Ryuu padded off, leaving the two woman to themselves.

I'm sorry again, for the inconvenience."

"It's really nothing." Sango smiled. "It's fun looking after Ryuunosuke. If you allow me to say so, he's one of the cutest children I've ever seen."

Oume-san smiled gently.

"Yeah, he is. He's so cute, it makes me almost envious, that he isn't mine." She looked at Sango with those amethyst eyes and chuckled lightly.

Sango returned the smile. "Personally, I'd say he's more your's than you think."

Oume-san smiled. "Thank you, Sango-san, you're very kind."

They watched for a while as Ryuunosuke was trying to string a sentence together, while talking to Kosuzu.

"Oh, will you just look at that." Oume-san whispered. "They're so sweet together, it almost hurts."

Sango chuckled. "Oh, they are. I'm afraid he broke my daughter's heart."

"How cruel. I'll have to chastisize him thoroughly."

Sango snickered underneath her breath.

"Nice scarf."

She turned to see Oume-san regarding the piece she received from Shinpachi only a short while ago.

"Thank you, my brother bought it for me."

"Oh, I so wish I had a brother to buy me things. Kamo never does."

Sango smirked. "Maybe you should get yourself a secret lover, who'd shower you with nice presents."

"What a fantastic idea! I'll have to give it some serious thought."

They both giggled at the thought. Everyone, who knew Oume-san, also knew she'd never cheat on Serizawa-san, even in spite of how gruff and insufferable that man could be. Not many people understood why a woman like Oume stayed with a man like Serizawa Kamo, but Sango guessed she had her reasons and it wasn't her place to judge it. After all, not many people understood either why Sango left behind her professional career in favor of family life.

"But really, Sango-san, you always look so fashionable and sexy."

Even my boyfriend thinks you're hot."

Sango smiled. "I'd say Oume-san, Serizawa-san still thinks you're hotter."

First an expression of surprise appeared on the beautiful face, before it went over to a smile that was almost wicked. "Thank you!"

They both shared another giggle.

"Unbelievable. I leave you two for five minutes and all you do when I return is giggle like girls."

They turned around to see Shinpachi grinning with amusement.

Sango smirked, turning to her brother.

"In case my breasts aren't clue enough for you" I am a girl."

Shinpachi sent his sister a look, that was a strange mixture of sharp and horrified, while Oume-san quietly chuckling into her hand, accepted the bag the man was giving her.

"Ryuunosuke-kun!" she called him over and Ryuu scurried back to her again. She reached out and he grasped her hand. "It's time to go."

Ryuunosuke pouted. "Do we really have to? I don't wanna go yet!"

Oume-san smiled at him. "You can come back tomorrow. And the day after that. And the entire week and anytime you want, you just have to ask me. But for now, please come with me. Your Daddy is surely waiting for us already."

Ryuunosuke still didn't look convinced.

"And I'm sure that Sango-san and your friends will leave soon too."

As if on cue, Sango nodded.

"I have to cook dinner after all. The 'Devil' will be coming home soon." She winked at Ryuunosuke and the boy giggled as he obviously realized the small inside joke.

"Okay..." the boy relented finally, before he dislodged himself from Oume-san. "But I have to do something first." he announced, before he begun rumaging through his bag.

"Alright, but hurry, yes?"

"Yeeeess." Ryuunosuke sung, before pulling out two of his drawings. Shinpachi had kept his promise, there wasn't a single crease on the sheets of paper.

The boy ran over to where the girls were standing and handed one of the papers to Kosuzu, with his face burning from embarrassment and

apparently stammering. Sango heard the excited gasp the little girl gave from across the playground and then Ryuu was assumably dying, or spontaneously combusting, as Kosuzu, from the sheer happiness of recieving a gift from the boy, hugged him.

Ryuunosuke quickly dislodged himself from the girl, muttering something, that made Kosuzu's lips pull into an 'o', before she giggled.

Then Ryuunosuke turned to Saigo, who untill now had been watching quietly from afar, obviously very sad, that her friend seemed to have forgotten all about her. But then Ryuunosuke handed her the second sheet of paper, still red, but a bit less embarassed and said something that Sango couldn't hear from the distance, but it put a smile onto Saigo's face that brightened her features with happiness and made the little girl look like an angel. Heisuke and Kosuzu were next to her in a moment, looking at the picture and, Sango could hear even from the distance, saying how nice it was. Sango swore she heard Heisuke say, that it looked nicer than what Kosuzu got, which made the brownhaired girl regard her picture a bit sadly. But then Saigo must have said something that cheered the girl up, because at the next moment they were hugging each other.

Sango was almost happy she didn't hear the entire conversation, because already the visuals were sheer cuteness.

Then Ryuu waved at his friends for one last time, before running over to Oume-san and taking her hand once again.

"Ready?" Oume-san asked, eyes shining down at Ryuunosuke with gentle affection, while the boy only nodded resolutely.

With that Oume-san bid goodbye to the siblings, waved at the kids and then they both left.

Sango watched their retreating forms for a while, noting that from the distance they really looked like mother and son, before turning to her own rascals.

"Heisuke, Saigo! Get your stuff together, we're leaving! Tou-san gets home soon and I still have to cook dinner!"

x*x

They were halfway through collecting all of Heisuke's stuff, when a boyish voice called out to them.

"Kaa-san!"

Sango turned around to see her two remaining children approach the playground.

"We've come to pick you up!" Chizuru waved at them and the youths sprinted towards them.

Heisuke ran up to his big immediately, dropping instantly all of his stuff, giving the girl an affectionate hug, which Chizuru returned lovingly.

"Nee-chan!"

"Heisuke-chan!"

Souji meanwhile held his arms out for his little sister, who was a moment later in her older brother's embrace.

"Hey there, Saigo-chan." Souji patted the dark hair and Saigo nuzzled her face into her brother's chest.

Sango regarded her kids with mild surprise from where she was picking up one of Heisuke's cars and turned to her oldest son.

"What gives?"

Souji shrugged.

"Nee-san thought it's getting late, so she thought she'd go and see what's keeping you. I tagged along."

With one look at her watch, Sango nodded.

"Have you eaten?"

"Nee-san wasn't hungry, so I ate the rest of the stew. It was good. The peppers tasted weird, though."

Only Shinpachi saw how Sango's shoulders stiffened, as she heard that.

"But I'm getting hungry again." Souji however, not noticing the slight discomfort he'd put his mother into, added then.

Sango smiled. "We'll go home, just as soon as we finish collecting Heisuke's...collection."

"I'll help you."

"Thank you." Sango smiled, but as soon as Souji was within reach, she grasped one of the boy's ears and tugged slightly, but enough to make the kid wince. "But if I catch wind of you watching action movies with Heisuke ever again, you'll be grounded for a month. Without internet, playstation, gameboy and cell-phone!"

"Gotcha Ma'am!"

Sango let him go, smiling sweetly.

"There's a good boy."

Souji pursed his lips and rubbed his ear, but other than that he didn't say anything else and returned to searching the ground for his younger brother's stuff.

x*x

Five minutes later they were on their way home, Heisuke lead by Chizuru and Saigo carried by Souji, while Sango and Shinpachi carried the bags, listening to their youngest talk animatedly.

"And then Souji, you know, you know, Ryuu gave Saigo a picture and

Saigo was very happy and blushed and thanked Ryuu and Ryuu blushed too!"

"Really?" Souji asked, his eyes narrowing to slits. "That's mighty interesting Heisuke. What happened then?"

Heisuke, completely unaware of the dark aura surrounding his brother, continued his story, while Sango watched with a fond smile on her face. Not many people knew it, but Souji had a very protective streak, when it came to either of his sisters. Just another of the quirks he had from his father. Right now, he really resembled Toushi, when the older man caught wind of someone flirting with Sango.

"Then? Uhm...Then Saigo and that other girl got really girly, you know weird like sometimes girls get and then they hugged-"

"Ryuunosuke and Saigo?"

Souji's look was so menacing, that Sango had to suppress a laugh.

"No, I'm telling you, Saigo and that other girl and then Ryuu had left."

"I see."

Souji seemed really relieved.

"Hey, Souji, are you alright?" Heisuke asked. "You got a really weird face."

"I feel fine, thank you Heisuke."

For a few moments there was silence.

"So you've been with the brat again."

"Don't call him that." Sango admonished. "He's a nice boy."

"Oh, yeah, sure."

Sango chuckled and only shook her head at the antics of her son. She supposed there was very little that could prove Ryuunosuke worthy in Souji's eyes, now that he knew that the little boy was crushing on one of his sisters.

They reached Shinpachi's house and came to a halt.

"Alright then." Shinpachi said and Sango turned to her brother. "Back to work."

"I take it you won't be coming over for dinner."

Shinpachi shook his head, blue eyes sad and regretful.

"You now I'd love to bro', but higher powers..."

Sango waved it off. "That's fine. I'll just bring you your share over."

"Bro', that's really not necessary, I'll just make myself a sandwich, or whatev—" he started waving his hands in front of himself, but Sango cut him off.

"Nonsense. There'll be enough left for you and I'll feel better knowing you're eating something adviseable."

Shinpachi eyed his sister for a small moment, before muttering, so only she could hear. "I'm not sure about adviseable, if it tastes anything like the peppers earlier, but if you insist..."

Sango shot him a murderous, outraged look, before sneering back at him. "Oh, I do. I insist. No one will suspect me of murder, if you die of food poisoning."

With a smile on his face, Shinpachi shook his head. Little sisters...

Sango meanwhile calmed down again. "I can also bring you a thermos bottle of coffee."

"Just don't forget to add salt."

Sango decided to ignore the statement, that was a wink at another... 'Sango-and-the-kitchen incident' dating few months back. "I know you've got coke, but coffee will keep you warmer. And you can alternate."

Shinpachi eyed his sister for several moments, like he was contemplating whether it made sense saying no to Sango, before his shoulders heaved with defeat, as he muttered underneath his breath something about little sisters and bossy girls.

"Fine, fine, alright. Go and poison me all you want. I've gotten quite immune against it, anyway." Sango's look was getting a bit offended by now and Shinpachi decided it was time to drop the jokes and smiled at her. "Kidding. If you want to cook for me so much, go ahead. I'm the last one to mind." And then he added with a small nod of gratitude. "Thank you."

Sango's smirk shone with triumph. "I'll be over after dinner."

ox*xo

"So you were with the brat again."

Toushi said, after he'd gotten home and demanded an explanation as to why dinner wasn't still ready, maybe not in the same exact words, but unmistakeably with that point.

Men.

Sango then told him about how they had been held up at the playground and those words had been the reply he gave her. Sango eyed her husband with a deadpan face as she heard that, a feeling of *deja-vu* washing over her. Really. Father and Son. If Souji was pot, Toushi

was kettle.

She didn't share the comparison with her husband though, admonishing him instead with the same words she'd already used on their son.
"Don't call him that. He's a nice boy."

"Oh yeah, a very fine boy. Not only is he Serizawa's brat, he's after Saigo!"

Sango wasn't sure whether to laugh or cry. She settled for smirking at the protectiveness.

"You're just jealous, because you've got competition."

"Nonsense!" Toushi cried, but Sango pretended she didn't hear him, giving her husband a mock sad face.

"Seems like you're not the only man in Saigo's heart anymore." Then she smirked, her voice returning to normal. "And she's only eight! Wonder what you'll do once she's fifteen and discovering that there are other boys in the world besides her brothers and father!"

Toushi's face turned from angry to horrified.

"That's not going to happen! I'll kill anyone who comes near her!"

Sango laughed. "Oh, if Saigo's anything like me at all..." she trailed off, but Toushi got the point anyway, as he screamed, hands clasping his ears tightly.

"No! Stop it! Sango, stop talking immediately!"

And as if Toushi didn't believe Sango was capable of doing that, he fled from the kitchen, making sure he didn't have to hear any of the scary future that awaited him, while all Sango could do was laugh so hard that she doubled over.

ox*xo

"Sango?"

They were after dinner and Sango was just packing her brother's share into a larger lunchbox, while the coffee was bubbling silently on the herd next to her, as Toushi approached her, a contemplating look in those midnight purple eyes.

"Do you think I'm too overprotective?"

Sango wasn't entirely sure how to reply to the unusual question.

Was he?

In complete opposite to their high school days, Toushi had become really conservative and a bit uptight, but she guessed any man who suddenly had a couple of kids to feed got like that. While it did scrape at the nerves a bunch of times, it had also been a pillar of massive support to Sango, during that turbulent first year of their

marriage. It was kinda assuring to know that she could rely on him, when she needed. And the kids had inherited this albeit annoying, but still wonderful quality from him so...who was she to complain?

But Toushi looked really serious ad he stood there in front of her, expectant and unsure, so Sango, pouring the coffee, that had finished brewing in the meantime, into the thermos, decided to answer him with a joke, to cheer him up.

"Oh, well. A bit maybe, but you still didn't lock Chizuru up in a tower to keep her from seeing boys, so..."

Toushi eyed her with a blank expression.

"Chizuru isn't interested in boys."

Sango almost spilled the coffee as she had to laugh again.

"Anata!" she finally locked the vacuum bottle and laid it into the bag next to the lunch box. "She's fourteen! Of course she's interested in boys! She's just clever enough not to let you in on that." And Sango couldn't but add teasingly, knowing exactly what she was doing to her husband. "And I must say, she's got quite the taste."

Toushi's eyes widened to the size of sake cups.

"What do you mean with that?"

Sango just smiled secretively at her husband, while she took the bag and headed for the door, Toushi trailing right behind her.

"Sango wait! Sango come back here and tell me immediately what you know! SANGO!"

But Sango was already out of the door, shutting it behind herself right into the face of her husband and whistling to herself over the accomplishment, she made her way over to her brother's.

As she was walking down the pavement of Shinpachi's yard, fumbling for the spare keys, the thought came to her, that what had seemingly begun as a quiet, normal day of routine, had come out as unexpectedly entertaining.

Smirking, Sango unlocked the door.

Whoever said, that kids were no fun?

With that last thought, she stepped into the house of her brother and shut the door behind herself.

ox*xox*xox*xox*xo

Notes

>I could now talk about why I decided to write some parts of the chapters as I did, but I'm not going to. Instead I'll just tell you, that whoever wants to see Saigo with pigtails, here's a link for my livejournal album, where I put stuffillustrations of the Shinsengumi family. I kinda blew the coloration, but there's an uncolored image

too, so...enjoy!

manaika. livejournal pics/catalog/3891

End
file.